

WEATHER FORECAST

PHILIPPINE WEATHER FORECAST FOR AUGUST 1, 2003
 Metro Manila: Partly cloudy with light rain
 Cebu: Partly cloudy with light rain
 Davao: Partly cloudy with light rain
 Iloilo: Partly cloudy with light rain
 Zamboanga: Partly cloudy with light rain

Second FRONT PAGE

See front page for more news coverage on the 2003 election in the Philippines

Region	Forecast	Region	Forecast
I	Partly cloudy with light rain	VIII	Partly cloudy with light rain
II	Partly cloudy with light rain	IX	Partly cloudy with light rain
III	Partly cloudy with light rain	X	Partly cloudy with light rain
IV	Partly cloudy with light rain	XI	Partly cloudy with light rain
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VI	Partly cloudy with light rain		
VII	Partly cloudy with light rain		

PNP willing to arm journalists

Noli dared to help solve murder of broadcaster

By Christian K. Espinoza and Jerome Nolasco

GENS are mightier than pigs?

Alarmed by the rising number of journalists being killed, the Philippine National Police yesterday said it was willing to arm reporters under duress.

Chief Insp. Joel Guzman, police spokesperson, said it was Phil Chief Commissioner Florencio B. Sison who raised the idea of arming journalists.

Guzman added that journalists needed only to apply for a permit to carry firearms outside of metropolitan areas.

"Carrying a gun is also important," he said.

The President's Office of the Philippines yesterday said the independent police chief had been killed by two journalists.

The PNP said the journalist had exposed the Atty. Gen. administration's plan to build a new prison in a "hot" area, which the Philippine media had been covering since the start of the president's term.

The group said the death of journalist Atty. Gen. Florencio B. Sison, who was killed by two journalists, was a "major" setback for the police.

"More than any other individual in power, the Atty. Gen. is the best person to do something about these things," the PNP said.

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UP, UP AND AWAY
 The numbers keep going up and away after the major gasoline hike. The numbers are up and away after the major gasoline hike.

Senator raises alarm over plight of poor RP kids

By Michael L. Ochoa

SEN. Paolo Duterte yesterday expressed alarm over the sorry state of poor children in the country and urged action to protect them.

"There are about 1.2 million street children in the country. And there are 60,000 prostituted children and 100,000 children in need of 1,200 annually making the Philippines the fourth country with the most number of prostituted children," said Duterte.

Guzman added that the Philippine administration's policy in managing population growth is the plight of the children.

"We should do an unbridled population growth. We should do an unbridled population growth. We should do an unbridled population growth."

The proposed bill that will create a multi-agency committee to coordinate, promote and implement policies on family planning, and other reproductive health education in grade 10.

Guzman supports a proposal for government to adopt a two-child policy.

Canadian faces raps for child sex in Southeast Asia

VANCOUVER, Canada—Prosecutors in Canada are mounting a prosecution against a Canadian citizen who is accused of child sex in Southeast Asia.

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Public relations man accuses 'Jamby' of harassment

By Michael L. Ochoa and Lory Garcia

SEN. Atty. General Ramon "Jamby" Madrigal was yesterday accused of harassment by a former aide who helped him rise to the top of the Philippine media.

The aide, who was accused of harassment by Madrigal, said that he was harassed by Madrigal.

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NPA sets terms for release of 2 soldiers

By Norberto Bantolaza, T. Bantolaza and Christian K. Espinoza

THE RELEASE of two Army soldiers being detained by the NPA is being held up by the NPA's demand for the release of two soldiers.

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terms and non-compliance of the NPA with the agreement," Bantolaza said.

"This will give the national army the NPA enough time and money to make soldiers and weapons for the release of two soldiers," Bantolaza said.

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SCHOOL BOYS
 A group of school boys are seen in a field. They are wearing white shirts and dark pants. There are some plants and trees in the background.

New Philippine Inquirer and SunMagazines in 1997 started at P80 (50¢)

Desk Editors: Carmel & Bilo; Editor: G. Delgado

Sleek underpass complex for QC's major avenues

By Tina S. Sarmiento

QCEC "can't handle" inside the Quezon City.

City government officials said they plan to build a complex of underpass roads into a sleek "world class" design with the construction of at least four underground passages.

Architect Gerardo Maga, of the city planning department, said they plan to build the underpass complex on two sites: on E. Central Road, Commonwealth (near the Quezon Museum), and on the Quezon Avenue.

But Maga said they would give priority to the proposed underpass on E. Central Road, which would be built in front of City Hall.

This would give motorists easy access to and from the Quezon Memorial Circle, he added.

The Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) initially proposed the building of two bridges or overpasses in various

parts of the city, but Mayor Remy Reyes later had approved the plan, Maga said.

"The mayor wants to preserve the plan. That's why he rejected any plan to build any structure that would destroy the city's beauty and the surrounding scenery," Maga said.

Many parkgoers had complained that they have a hard time going to the Quezon Memorial Circle over the MMDA-restricted islands on the main thoroughfares.

"We will build and build every time we cross the road," said Mayor Reyes, a 35-year-old mother who brings her three children to the park regularly on weekends.

In the past, on weekends, many islands where we would have to cross in park before crossing over the Circle," she said.

But the islands are gone.

Today, there is no such island

in the middle of the road, just a concrete

island.

There had been several instances where pedestrians had been hit by cars, or where they had been hit by the road itself, a motorist said.

"But that's what we need, they are not to be found," he added.

Francis Abad, a bus

driver.

"You would really see the MMDA side working over the road and making sure the plan is

being followed," he added.

Costing at the project would cost the city government about P10 million for each underpass

which is expected to begin before the year ends.

Many parkgoers are pleased with the project, but some think the project is too

Late sexy star's dad arrested

By Lela S. Sarmiento

THE BROTHER of the late sex star Hilary Swank was arrested on Thursday night after allegedly threatening to slash the newly-elected vice

governor of the state, Leland Scott Swank, Jr. was caught by agents of the National Bureau of Investigation and the Army to his house on West Virginia Avenue.

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Alleged killer of kin star's dad arrested

By Lela S. Sarmiento

THE PRINCIPAL suspect in the killing of college student Ricardo Reyes, brother of prominent businessman, Hilary Swank, was

arrested on Thursday night after allegedly threatening to slash the newly-elected vice

governor of the state, Leland Scott Swank, Jr. was caught by agents of the National Bureau of Investigation and the Army to his house on West Virginia Avenue.

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the brother of Hilary Swank and the Quezon Highway where they met, one of whom was arrested with a 20-caliber revolver, using up to his name number and asked for his

signature.

The third suspect, a brother of the first suspect, was arrested

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FOR PEACE
Members of the peace-oriented group Peace Camp after 10 minutes and candlelit world peace in front of the Japanese Embassy in Manila in a candlelit world peace demonstration. In the background, the Japanese Embassy in Manila is visible.

2 'hospitals on wheels' for PGH

By TJ Burgos

PHILIPPINE "hospitals on wheels" are the latest acquisition of the government at University of the Philippines

Philippine General Hospital on July 15.

The two fully-equipped ambulances worth 35 million each are expected to boost the hospital's capability in responding

to emergencies in the city.

While such vehicles are only

ambulances, the police in a time, the new ambulances are more spacious than the regular

type, giving the patients more breathing space and the medical staff additional space to attend

to them.

Both are equipped with sound amplifiers or loudspeakers, and

portable oxygen tanks, and

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portable oxygen tanks, and

would be a good idea for the

hospital to have more of these

vehicles.

With the acquisition, the

hospital's capability in

responding to emergencies

is expected to be improved.

The hospital is expected to

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Robbers use police uniforms as props

By Lela S. Sarmiento

THE PHILIPPINE police robbery in Quezon City last night was the first time that robbers used

police uniforms as props.

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Angara and Lacson degrade Senate



ON TARGET
Angara and Lacson

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Lacson. The man was paid off by

Lacson. The man was paid off by

Angara and Lacson had each

demanded themselves, but also

the money from which to which

to which.

Former Sen. Arturo Lacson

among the best loved of his

countrymen who died of old age

a few days ago, probably related

over his wife's phone in the

area was.

The man had the privilege of

being the father of the nation's

first president, the nation's

first president, the nation's

first president, the nation's

first president, the nation's

Why can't the police arrest a

man who is a member of the

police? Why can't the police

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of the police? Why can't the

police arrest a man who is a

member of the police? Why

can't the police arrest a man

Palace tells judges: Respect independent gov't watchdogs

By GE Calacang Jr.

MALACANANG yesterday said judges must respect the rulings of independent watchdogs such as the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) as vital as the executive branch has respected the rulings of the judiciary.

"We should all consider the separation of powers of the three branches of government. But we must also respect the opinion of each branch and Malacanang has always respected the decision of the courts," said presidential spokesperson Spokes Iñigo in an interview with ABS radio.

Malacanang had previously urged judges to lay off cases involving economic and highly technical matters beyond their field of expertise.

"We make an appeal to our courts to give the ERC, also an independent body, the benefit of the doubt and allow it to exercise its competence and proficiency in resolv-

ing highly complicated and technical power issues," said Iñigo who read a statement prepared by Energy Secretary Vince Perez.

Malacanang made the statement after the Court of Appeals ruled last week that the ERC "grudgingly agreed" when it approved Manila Electric Co.'s 17-cent per kilowatt-hour rate hike without undertaking the mandatory audit of its financial books.

The court ordered the ERC to review Manila's petition after the Commission on Audit has gone through the country's largest private power utility firm's records.

Malacanang's remarks did not sit well with the country's leading court officials including Chief Justice Rodrigo Davide.

"It's not a question of expertise in economic policies because indeed we don't have expertise. But when the Constitution is tested, we do have the authority," Davide retorted.

First Filipino bishop in US arriving Sunday

THE FIRST Filipino to be named bishop in the United States is scheduled to arrive tomorrow for a three-week visit to reunite with his homeland.

Most Rev. Oscar Acosta Sola is scheduled to visit his hometown in Nueva Ecija and his former schools.

Sola was appointed by Pope John Paul II to be an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles last year. He was ordained bishop by Cardinal Roger Mahony on Feb. 12, 2004 and assigned as coordinator of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles has the most number of Filipino Catholics in the United States.

Sola will celebrate his first

Mass in Manila as bishop on Aug. 11 at the Manila Cathedral in the presence of Manila Archbishop-Gatekeeper B. Pioses.

A native of San Jose, Nueva Ecija, he is the son of Mariano de la Piedad Sola and Aurora Ortega Acosta. He has three sisters and three brothers, one of whom is a priest assigned in Hong Kong.

He graduated cum laude from the University of Santo Tomas Central Seminary with a degree in Sacred Theology and obtained post graduate studies in (General Religion and Culture).

He was ordained priest on April 28, 1979.

In 1984 he moved to the United States, first in New Jersey and then in Louisiana.

Twins will see each other face to face for 1st time

By Philip Geronzo

The hospital continued to describe the boys' condition as "stable and improving." Dr. Eugene Fernandez, director of the neonatal intensive care unit, said the boys' condition was "stable and improving."

Doctors performed two major surgeries on the boys to gradually separate the lungs, instead of the stomach organs used to provide separation of conjoined organs.

Remarkable progress

"A huge step forward in this remarkable process has been accomplished," Fernandez said. "We hope that Carl and Clarence will now begin to develop as two separate and unique individuals."

Dr. James Goodrich, the anesthesiologist who led the operating team, said surgeons discovered that a 10-square-centimeter (2.5-square-inch) area of the boys' brains at the back of the heads was fused just as they thought they were testing separation.

Doctors had expected to be lucky to be doing just one surgery, "surprisingly," Goodrich said, at a hospital where conjoined twins are rare.

Boys talking together

"Obviously the boys were talking to each other," he said, "meaning talking jointly in one way."

By referring to three-dimensional images created in advance and following the markers they could see, the doctors manipulated the brain apart without needing to do incisions. Goodrich said he had said "I think we cannot separate" without being optimistic.

"The hope is that the consequences in this case are less," he said.

Goodrich said it would be "at least a week to 10 days" until the boys could have their own separate lives. "In reality we are managing the brain apart without needing to do incisions, which is a huge step forward," he said.

He said the boys' brains were fused at the back of the heads but were not fused at the front, which means they can breathe without any problems.

He added, "I think I do it very well against the odds."

Reconstruction of skull

After the separation, Goodrich and the boys' family surgeons, Dr. David Staffenberg, started reconstructing the boys' brains, leaving scars that will be visible on the boys' heads.

The surgeons included some additional work on the boys' brains. "In reality we are managing the brain apart without needing to do incisions, which is a huge step forward," he said. "The hope is that the consequences in this case are less," he said.

"The boys will be in intensive psychological support," Goodrich said. "The family will be in intensive psychological support."

Goodrich and the staff will have the boys in any situation in the boys' heads of spinal fluid and maintenance of liquid in the brain.

Watching out for complications

In and in the next two days, doctors will watch for the progress of infection and other complications and they will take up to two weeks to assess possible complications.

"This is an extremely complex case," Goodrich said, adding that during the surgery doctors were monitoring several "very" systems.

Goodrich said the boys' brains were in very good condition.

One in both twins after the other surgery, and the boys' condition was in very good condition.

For the doctors involved in the surgery, the boys' condition was in very good condition. "The boys' condition was in very good condition," he said.



THE HIGHLY complex operation to separate the twins may be viewed from the surgically sterile wiring, instruments and tubes that keep track of the boys' condition inside the intensive surgical ward of Mountbatten Medical Center. When they wake up, they'll see each other again and face for the first time.

The twins will need as many as three more operations to become two children.

Free services

Goodrich said that after the boys have been separated, they'll go back into physical therapy at Mountbatten Medical Center. In addition, when they are discharged, the boys' family surgeons, Dr. Eugene Fernandez, will be in charge of the boys' care.

Goodrich said the boys' brains were fused at the back of the heads but were not fused at the front, which means they can breathe without any problems.

Like a miracle

Most 20 doctors and surgeons who were present at the August 1st surgery in San Diego, praised the boys' condition. "The boys' condition was in very good condition," he said.

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TOGETHER with Dr. Eugene Fernandez, director of Pediatric Neurosurgery and Dr. David A. Staffenberg, chief plastic surgeon, speak at a press conference in New York on Thursday.



SPORING the twins' condition at the Mountbatten Medical Center. When they wake up, they'll see each other again and face for the first time.

2 Baguio artists bag awards in Asean tilt

By Philip Geronzo

Goodrich said, adding that during the surgery doctors were monitoring several "very" systems. "The boys' condition was in very good condition," he said. "The boys' condition was in very good condition," he said.

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It was the first time that the experience of the country in the prestigious competition.

The decision of the five-member panel of judges was announced last night. Dr. Eugene Fernandez, director of the neonatal intensive care unit, said the boys' condition was in very good condition.

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UN, Sudan agree to disarm marauders in Darfur

BY MICHAEL S. BARBER—Sudan and the United Nations have agreed a plan to limit the humanitarian crisis and disarm marauding militia in Darfur in an effort to avert devastating UN sanctions, UN officials said on Thursday.

The agreement, announced, would set out a series of steps to disarm the Janjaweed and other extremist groups, on improving security in Darfur, and on addressing the humanitarian crisis.

UN secretary-general Kofi Annan said the UN Security Council had agreed a resolution demanding Khartoum disarm 200,000 Janjaweed militia, accused of pillaging, raping and driving the refugees off their land.

Announcing the deal, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said he expects in 30 days to see much progress the government has made.

The resolution said that if Sudan was not complying it would consider imposing unspecified sanctions.

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Iraqis face own kidnapping epidemic

BAKIR KHALIL—“Give us \$500,000, or we’ll give you back your son’s head,” the notes on the other end of the phone say as Lam Khashoggi, 44, if you tell anyone about this, we’ll come and blow your house up.”

Two days earlier, his 14-year-old son, Rami, was snatched from around the corner of their house, and the car repair shop owner was only just beginning to grasp the implications of the racket behind his son’s kidnapping.

“Where am I going to get \$500,000? What did I see some kind of millionaire?” Khashoggi glowered with the man on the phone.

But the kidnappers knew he could afford to pay ransom. They knew that three days earlier, the family had been in Syria, where one of Khashoggi’s two daughters was married. They even knew Khashoggi’s telephone number.

“I can only afford \$2,000. And an owl gave me my son. God can take him away,” Khashoggi said. Then he hung up the phone and sobbed.

While scores of kidnappers have been kidnapped by militants as leverage to their rights against the government and coalition forces, Iraqi law enforcement has been overwhelmed by kidnappings in the chaos since the fall of Saddam Hussein’s regime last year. The sector is simply massive.

There are no accurate numbers on how many have been kidnapped, but some Iraqis have a theory to tell about someone they know who was kidnapped—an immediate family member, a relative, or a close friend.

“This has happened so often, and we are doing our best to deal with it,” said George Sule, spokesman for Interior Prime Minister Mustafar al-Jabouri.

One of the biggest problems is keeping kidnappers in jail because the legal system isn’t working, said Abdul Salim, an Interior Ministry spokesman.

“Even if they capture one of them, they are so corrupt. They realize you can’t go out, as they say,” Salim said.

He cited the October 2003 amnesty, in which Saddam freed about 100,000 prisoners right before the war, as the main reason for the problems.

Kidnappers are struggling to equip themselves and carry out multimillion-dollar operations. They have even purchased safety insurance from attached police stations and government agencies, viewing it as a way to protect themselves from military action.

SPORTS

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Editor: Teodoro C. Molinos

Knights rip Blazers; Stags down Bombers

By Joanne W. Pags

DEFENDING champion Letran bravely opened its second-round campaign as the Knights crushed the Blazers 35, 16, while the Stags, 19-7, yesterday in the 11th NCAA women's basketball tournament at the Ateneo Davao.

Letran was able to take the early lead with its first player, Zing Rodriguez, scoring 10 points in the first quarter.

Letran and San Beda, which played in the second quarter, were 12-10 in the first half, while the Blazers were 10-12 in the first half. Letran, however, quickly got its act together for a 35-16 final score, a 19-point victory.

All 11 Knights fielded several with solid work, with Rodriguez scoring 12 points. San Beda's Rodriguez, back in action after a nine-game suspension, added 11.

Letran finished with 11 points, including a 10-point game by Rodriguez in the first half. The Knights won the game 35-16, with a 19-point victory. The Knights won the game 35-16, with a 19-point victory.

LETTRAN VS. BLAZERS
 1st half: 12-10
 2nd half: 23-6
 Total: 35-16
 Letran: 12-10
 Blazers: 10-12

LETTRAN VS. STAGS
 1st half: 12-10
 2nd half: 7-19
 Total: 19-29
 Letran: 12-10
 Stags: 7-19

LETTRAN VS. STAGS
 1st half: 12-10
 2nd half: 7-19
 Total: 19-29
 Letran: 12-10
 Stags: 7-19

Letran also stopped up with its shooting, but San Beda's Rodriguez scored 10 points in the first quarter. Letran's Rodriguez scored 10 points in the first quarter.



LETTRAN'S Roger Rodriguez (right) shoots the ball during the game with the Blazers. (Photo by J. Pags)

US magazine sees Tañamor bronze medal

SPORTS Illustrated has picked Filipino star Tañamor to win the bronze medal in the men's 100-meter sprint (100 m) at the Athens Olympics.

Including with its analysis, the 100-year-old magazine has made its medal predictions for all 30 sports events prior to the start of the Olympics.

Writer Brian Kavanagh chose Tañamor to win the bronze medal in the men's 100-meter sprint. He also chose Tañamor to win the bronze medal in the men's 100-meter sprint.

The Time Warner publication selected Tañamor to win the gold in the 100 m. It also selected Tañamor to win the gold in the 100 m.

Interestingly, the magazine predicted that the US men's basketball team, composed of 12 players, would win the gold medal. The US squad was named by July 25, 2004, and the magazine's prediction was made in a recent issue.

The magazine also named the American women's basketball team to win the gold medal. The magazine's prediction was made in a recent issue.



PHOTO: AP/WIDE WORLD. The athletes of the Philippines are seen with the medal during the medal ceremony.

Tommy gains final round with 77

TOMMY Matney lost some momentum in his final round of the 2004 US Open, but he still managed to win the tournament. He finished with a score of 77 in the final round.



PHOTO: AP/WIDE WORLD. Tommy Matney is seen during the final round of the 2004 US Open.

He lost to a second-round loss in the final round. He finished with a score of 77 in the final round.

American's Matney lost to a second-round loss in the final round. He finished with a score of 77 in the final round.

7 DAYS TO ATHENS Jethro doesn't want pressure in firing for gold

By Maning B. Garcia

PHILIPPINE world-class shooting Jethro doesn't have a new way to go. He is still the same old Jethro, but he is still the same old Jethro.

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Discovering San Joaquin's beauty

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Thailand had the safeguard duty imposed to protect the local cement industry from the surge of imported cement in the country.

RP wants rice included in WTO's special products list

By Christine A. Capilan

THE PHILIPPINES will push the inclusion of rice in a proposed special products list during a World Trade Organization meeting to be held in September, a senior official of the Department of Agriculture said.

Officials also will talk under this

category will continue to argue for full access with the negotiating members giving a high priority to their own tariff reduction schedule.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Duque III said the government would be an alternative negotiating strategy of the special products list. He said the country's rice importers

The Philippines is currently negotiating with eight countries for the extension of its QRTS (Quota-Rate Tariff System). The QRTS is a system to protect the local market from the adverse impact of a possible influx of cheap imports.

"There will be more flexible treatment for special products. Our position is that there should

be no tariff reduction or, if there will be any, tariff reductions should be limited. There should also be no reduction of the TRQ (Tariff Rate Quota) commitments," Duque said.

Under the TRQ system, WTO members commit to import certain volumes of sensitive commodities at preferential tariff rates.

The WTO's framework agreement for world trade made provision for the creation of a list of "special products" that would protect the agricultural sectors of developing countries like the Philippines.

The government will stress the products that it will not

request for inclusion in that list.

"But we expect that certain countries exporting to the Philippines will try to limit the number of special products that we can declare," he said.

Farm sector seen creating more jobs

MANILA (AP) — Macapagal Arroyo's target of creating six million jobs during her first six-year term will be significantly boosted by the steadily increasing levels of farm productivity.

Agriculture Undersecretary Theresa Cruz Capellan said the optimistic projection was based on the actual performance of the agriculture sector in job creation during Arroyo's first term.

"Actual jobs created in farming and fisheries from 2001 to 2004 made up about 42 percent of the one million jobs pledged by President Arroyo during her first term," Capellan said.

She said National Statistics

figures indicated that some 500,000 jobs in farming and agriculture were generated during the period.

Capellan said that if current trends were sustained, the production of hybrid rice, corn, bananas and coconuts in different areas in the country would be among the biggest job creation during the next six years of the Arroyo administration.

Capellan said an estimated 100,000 jobs will be generated from May to October this year for the new season crop of the Gloria hybrid rice variety. Another 240,000 jobs are expected to be added as the dry season cropping begins in November.

PLDT to push . . . (See page B2)

ly worth P1.37 billion.

Angliman said that the DICT group had completed the first stage of the equity transaction after selling the preferred Phil shares to Smart. This was followed by the conversion of about 4.5 million shares, which allowed Smart to gain an initial 22.7 percent stake in Phil.

The second stage would be Smart's conversion of the remaining preferred shares as well as its purchase of Phil's common shares.

Angliman said that Phil's share price was reflected in the company's financials, after Smart agreed to restrictions on the external rating agency's rating.

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SATURDAY *Special*

Editor Nestor U. Torre ■ Assistant Editor Rito P. Asilo

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Eric Bana could be the new James Bond



BANA. From
"Hulk" to 007.

LONDON— Eric Bana, star of "Hulk" and "Troy," is the surprise new choice to play as James Bond, a report said recently.

The beefy 35-year-old had beaten off competition from British actors such as Jude Law and Ewan McGregor to take over the role of the super-spy in the long-running film franchise, the News of the World said.

Current Bond, Irish actor Pierce Brosnan, has stepped down after four films following a row with producers, the Sunday tabloid title said.

21st title

Bana was still negotiating with the series' producers, but they were hopeful he would take over for the 21st title in the series, due to begin filming later this year.

"Eric is the guy they want but he has a reputation for being demanding. They want to modernize Bond and turn him into a youthful, suave, modern hero to compete with the likes of Spiderman and Keanu Reeves in 'The Matrix,'" the source said.

James Bond films, based on the novels of Ian Fleming, have proved hugely successful ever since the first title, 1962's "Dr No," which starred Sean Connery.

AFP

SATURDAY Special

Special double-page spread on celebrity/entertainment (2007 photo) on 100 (100)

Top directors still dote on Amy Austria

By Macon W. Torres

Amy Austria may no longer be regarded as a major bankable star, but she continues to maintain insightful and inspired performances in more significant films. In, we investigated (youd, "What would Filipino movies do with out her?" Local question

We have quite a number of gifted women actresses, but why is it that our directors invariably opt to work with Amy in their most important projects?

Most impressive

Maureen Lee Rhone in "Singing Lessons," Marjorie Dela Torre in "Magallanes," and Arlene O'Connell in "Babes sa Brindas" are only three of our better actresses who date on Amy, thus nothing but to come up with one of the most impressive filmographies in the business.

This is quite an achievement, especially when you factor in the fact that some industry people think that Amy is just for coffee grinds.

But, that's neither here nor there. The point of commercial quality and complete believability Amy can't be lost. So, what's to stop a daring filmmaker to back the industry's dependence on bankable stars, and cast Amy in a challenging lead role in his/her production?

What a brilliant reasoning that that would be, and here it would turn the industry on its ear. If viewers would support it and make it a sleeper hit — it's true that we've placed a monetary and probably limiting bet in some cases on the producer's eye — and the film for Amy's earlier movies (some on the right).

Fourth projection

Amy has her exceptional talent, a major asset. Amy has to her relatively polished presentation, thus, the versatile actress is able to believably play a wide range of characters apart from their late life in their film, making her a director's dream performer.

Amy's latest vehicle, "Beautiful Life," is a somewhat heavy viewing proposition, but very true to form, Amy's performance is it somewhat as the film shows.

It's also the most challenging portrait in the film, because most of the scenes in the movie play victims of victims of a terrorist bombing (and, while Amy is cast in the racially different role of the terrorist's mother).

It's a truly challenging part, because it's very difficult to make a character like that come off sympathetically. And yet, Amy is so gifted and perceptive that she manages to pull off that role superbly well, avoiding any quickly-moving away with the movie.

Superlative acting

The operative word in quickly that's the way Amy works her magic on audiences, with practically none of the histrionics, melodramatic flourishes and show-me-emotion-acting that we usually see on local television.

Instead of displaying her brilliance as an actress, Amy chooses to concentrate on understanding the character she's playing as well as that she can be her, rather than using up a scene on trying to impress the audience.

This, in fact, is an unusual thought approach may arise some viewers as lacking in "color," "highlight" and "impact," but people who know superlative acting when they see it are most appreciative of Amy's more subtle and understated approach.

Smooth grooves in new albums

By Ben F. Allen

If you're tired of Kanye West's heavy hip-hop, mixtures of Prince's funk, progressive rock, and experimental pop, here's a new album that will take you down after a hard day's work. It's Chloë Sevigny's "Mystery Juice" and Steve Ball's "The Unwashed" compilation.



Chloë Sevigny's "Mystery Juice" is a world of music.

Interestingly, the last record that Sevigny has (2.1.04) Ball's second album, "Mystery Juice," comes from the unique musicality of 12 instrumental, swing-inspired tracks from Chloë's other music recordings.

Traditional instruments

These go a little further than you may have heard before, but what are these songs for? The use of traditional instruments like the erhu (a two-stringed, pipe-like instrument), the guqin (a seven-stringed, zither-like instrument), the guzheng (a 12-stringed, zither-like instrument), and the guzheng (a 12-stringed, zither-like instrument) to put a world music quality in familiar music.

The 12-track CD is not just a Chinese, it's a world of music.



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SATURDAY *Special*

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NOW SHOWING

Comic verve on a tight leash

By Rito P. Asilo

"Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind"

D: Michel Gondry
C: Jim Carrey, Kate Winslet

SHY, self-effacing boy meets straight-talking, feisty girl. They fall head over heels in love, and commence a passionate but tumultuous relationship. One day, she decides to have him and all memories about their relationship "erased" from her mind.

Unable to stand the pain and loneliness, he decides to do the same. But, while his mind readily acquiesces, his heart resists. Is true love worth all the trouble and heartache?

Gondry breathes life into Charlie Kaufman's highly inventive, bizarre tale. He knits his intelligent, bittersweet love story with incredible scenarios made plausible and palatable by an ingeniously written script and disarming performances by Jim Carrey (who keeps his frenetic comic verve on a tight leash), Kate Winslet and Kirsten Dunst.

Like Gondry's extraordinary film (whose title is culled from a beautiful Alexander Pope verse), *Life* doesn't "write" pat conclusions for all of us. But, it occasionally hits us on the head to remind us that, really, some things are worth fighting for!

"Garfield: The Movie"

D: Pete Hewitt
S: Bill Murray, Breckin Meyer

Clueless, disco-dancing canine Odie steals the thunder from Jim Davis' computer-generated, lazy, lasagna-loving comic-strip feline, Garfield (voiced by Murray). When his master, Jon Arbuckle (Meyer), upon the prodding of beautiful veterinarian Liz (Jennifer Love Hewitt), decides to adopt the scruffy mongrel, Garfield's cat-centric fantasy world is suddenly threatened!

The jealous cat finds the solution to his dilemma when an unscrupulous infomercial TV show host kidnaps the crowd-pleasing Odie—then, Garfield's pangs of jealousy slowly turn into feelings of guilt. He rationalizes: "Nobody mistreats Odie but me!"

Murray tweaks the appropriately un sentimental voice work of Lorenzo Music on the animated TV series with his trademark humor and cynicism. However, his improvised tone in characterization somehow makes Garfield more sinister and scheming, and therefore, less appealing than he should be.

Meanwhile, Odie—with his underdog (pun intended) demeanor and amusing terpsichorean skills—wins his master with the fat cat by default!

"Beautiful Life"

D: Gil Portes
S: Gloria Romero, Dina Bonnevie

Gil Portes' well-intentioned film, "Beautiful Life," explores the dynamics of grief and acceptance in Regal's star-studded three-hanky melodrama. When a bomb goes off at a local airport, the lives of many people are changed forever, as they struggle to understand the effects of violence, and cope with the loss of their loved ones.

Magda (Gloria Romero) refuses to accept the death of her husband, whom she loses on their 50th wedding anniversary; she imagines him dancing, eating and flirting with her. Carmen (Dina Bonnevie) loses her son, and finds it hard to accept his fiancée and her former husband (Ricky Davao) back in her life.

Dolor's (Angel Aquino) departed husband (Raymond Bagatsing) doesn't just leave her his restaurant business—he leaves her a mistress (Aubrey Miles), a sick son, and a best friend (Reggie Curley) who's secretly in love with him! The suicide bomber's mom, Benita (Amy Austria), has to deal not only with her son's death, but also with guilt and public indignation.

Glossy and beautifully shot (check out a scene where Austria walks on a foot bridge), it also boasts of a memorable theme song (Noel Cabangon's "Kay Ganda ng Buhay") and above-par production values.

But, the movie is trite, sappy, and constantly resorts to emotional blackmail. It is replete with "engineered" situations that test viewers' patience—which is a pity, because Portes is otherwise one of our more reliable directors.

Benita attends a support group for the families of her son's victims, and wonders why she's given the cold shoulder and gets a tongue-lashing from Carmen; soldiers barge into Benita's bar to look for her terrorist son, Abel, and then, as they leave, they tell her that he's dead. Huh? Apparently the film's scribes didn't notice those lapses.

Despite the promising premise, the movie fails to probe deeper into its characters' grief. The actors graze through their roles with oodles of mush and lachrymal exercises. And, while this type of grieving is not uncommon, the characters in the film "disperse" all too similar reactions. (Check out Charlotte Sampson's subdued performance as a grieving widow in Francois Ozon's "Under the Sand.")

Actors should be reminded that crying on cue is not the be all and end all of a good performance. They can't simply wing things on the misguided mantra, "If all else fails, cry..." When Magda reacts to a tearjerker on TV she says, "Ano ba yan, puro jerami!" Our thoughts exactly.



WINSLET AND CARREY. Disarming performances.